

I CLAIM:

1. A printer having at least one printhead, the at least one printhead including:

an array of nozzles and respective ink ejectors that, in use, eject ink onto a media substrate; and,

- 5 a nozzle guard positioned to inhibit damaging contact with the exterior of the array of nozzles;

said nozzle guard having an array of passages in registration with the array of nozzles so as not to impede the normal trajectory of the ink ejected from each nozzle, each of said passages having an inner end adjacent the nozzles and an outer end remote from the nozzles;

said nozzle guard including at least one fluid inlet opening in fluid communication with the inner ends of the passages

the printer including a source of a pressurized fluid in fluid communication with the at least one fluid inlet opening, wherein said fluid passes through said passages from the inner ends to the outer ends, to inhibit the build up of foreign particles on the nozzle array.

2. A printer according to claim 1 wherein said fluid passes through said passages at a velocity that is less than the velocity of the ejected ink

3. A printer according to claim 1 wherein ink droplets are ejected at a velocity of 3m/s.

4. A printer according to claim 1 wherein the fluid is passed through the passages at 1m/s.

5. A printer according to claim 1 wherein the nozzle guard includes a nozzle shield, the passageways formed in the nozzle shield.

6. A printer according to claim 5 wherein the shield is formed from silicon.
7. A printer according to claim 1 wherein the nozzle guard includes supports that support the nozzle shield on the printhead.
8. A printer according to claim 7 wherein the supports are integrally formed with the shield, the supports including a pair of spaced support elements one being arranged at each end of the nozzle shield.
- 5 9. A printer according to claim 8 wherein the fluid inlet openings are arranged in one of the support elements.
- 10 10. A printer according to claim 8 wherein the fluid inlet openings are arranged in the support element remote from a bond pad of the nozzle array.
11. A printer according to claim 1 wherein the fluid is air.
12. A printer according to claim 1 wherein the source of a pressurized fluid is a pump.